

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Taylor Biniarz, and I am from Ellington, CT. I stand in support of HB 6616: "An Act Concerning Expansion Of Husky Health Benefits To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status". Expanding access to HUSKY regardless of immigration status is an important step in ensuring the immigrant community has access to the healthcare they need. If Connecticut wants a future that includes healthy families and a stable, thriving and growing workforce that is ready to meet the needs of our future, Connecticut must ensure that these individuals up to age 26 have access to health coverage.

While I am not an immigrant, I am on husky and had one heck of an experience in our own healthcare system last year. I was turning 26 in June and was preparing to sign up for Husky when my insurance would end. In January of 2022 I called my mothers insurance company and asked them if my insurance would expire the day I turned 26, the end of the month, or the end of the year. I was told that it would be at the end of the month of June and then I talked to those at Husky to see when I should submit my application, got a date range and marked it.

Then one day in early May my therapist remarked to me that my insurance had reached out and said that I am not covered anymore and I reached out to them and it turned out my coverage had lapsed in April when my mother had retired and the insurance company did not let me know, which they had no duty to. I had unknowingly been uninsured for over a month, taking a road trip to and from Virginia to visit my family. I now owed several hundred dollars to my therapist's office. I now needed insurance and was frazzled and panicked over both being uninsured and also owing that amount of money because they had no requirement to inform me. I was extremely lucky that my dad could put me on his until the end of the year and then I would apply for husky. There was a month until I was technically insured and I did not go anywhere that month to lower the risk of something happening to me. Then at the end of the year I applied for husky, and was approved.

I already supported this bill during prior years but do even more so after that experience in which I was still privileged in several ways. I also truly believe that anything needed to survive: water, housing, food, etc should be a free human right. Radical I know, but this includes a right to healthcare. Every human being has the right to see a doctor for preventative medicine, emergency medicine, and for when they are sick or hurt. No one should be denied healthcare and a chance at survival because of their immigration status

In my former testimony years ago for a public option I ended on a strong personal belief of mine, and I will do so again here:

I support HB 6616 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation out of committee in its current form - to expand HUSKY access to age 26. Our work does not end with

expanding access up to age 12 nor with expanding access up to age 18. And that work must continue this year by expanding HUSKY access up to age 26. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Healthcare is a human right and there is no excuse beyond capitalism and greed for why most do not view it that way. I know that there are a lot of facts that others will testify with, but these are human lives, and one life is worth more than all the profit. I am ashamed that our country hasn't realized that yet.

Thank you for your time,

Taylor Biniarz